

# The Semaphore

A Publication of the TELEGRAPH HILL DWELLERS

Issue 215

Autumn 2016

Beekeeping on the Hill  
Key Ballot Propositions  
Saying GoodBye to June  
Cliff-Hangers

VOTE FOR OUR  
NEIGHBORHOOD!

# THE HONEYBEES OF TELEGRAPH HILL

by Kate McGee

The honeybees left a windswept North Beach roof deck for the eastern slope of Telegraph Hill in 2010. They found a home in and around the Greenwich Street gardens with help from three people besides me and my family, their official beekeepers. Judy Irving sponsored a pilot program with the Department of Public Works to provide urban agriculture in a public right of way; John Cowen welcomed them with open arms; and Tony Marcell often helps with beekeeping. The bees took to their new home like...bees to honey.

The gardens' diverse foliage gives the bees a constant food source no matter the season. The less windswept east-facing slope allows them to fly with relative ease. Because the bees live in the Greenwich gardens, we named their honey after Valetta Heslet, daughter of Grace Marchant. Valetta moved here from the Marina in the 1930s with her husband Desmond in part because she too preferred the Hill's less windy climate (see Mark Bittner's book *The Wild Parrots of Telegraph Hill*). The honey labels were designed in the style of Desmond Heslet's work—in particular, the label for Challenge Butter.

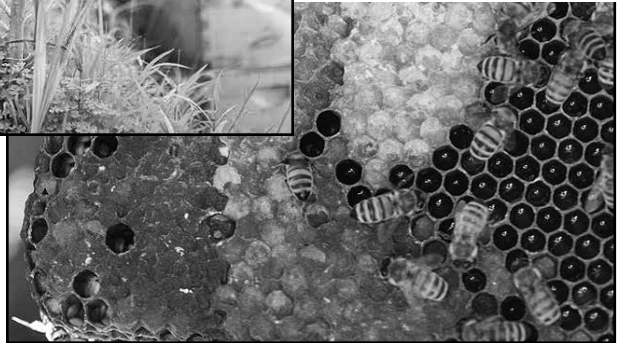
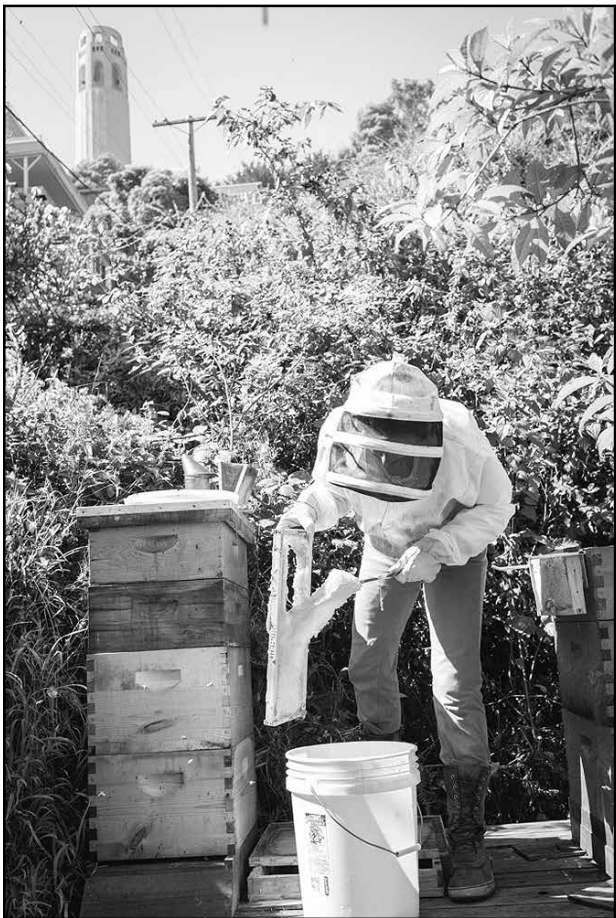
My sons and I trained as beekeepers at the Green Gulch Zen center in Marin, where emphasis is on adhering to the bees' natural tendencies. No mechanisms are used that would dictate their behavior, such as queen excluders, and no insecticides or plastics. Because of this, the hive must be completely level in order for the bees to naturally draw comb down in a straight line so we can easily remove the frames to extract honey. John Engdahl (whose artwork, including Tatiana the tiger, graces the Hill) constructed a level platform for the hive.

We harvest honey every few weeks from March to September. Its flavor differs with each harvest, reflecting what is in bloom at the time—plum, rosemary, ivy, lemon, blueberry etc. There are Heslet Honey fans all over the world—Vietnam, Australia, France, Japan, Canada and various parts of the US. In 2012, Heslet Honey was featured in San Francisco's *Where* and *7X7* magazines. It was sold not just on our front stoop but in stores across the city, including in North Beach, the Mission, and NoPa, at \$24 for a 7.75-oz jar.

This year, we have decided to no longer sell the honey, but instead to donate it to those in need of healthy food packed with energy. The hives represent

our community: not just how they came to be on the hill, but the honey they produce reflects the care we place in our gardens. It is our hope to make Heslet Honey a gift from our community, a way for Telegraph Hill to give back to the city we all love. We welcome your suggestions, and we thank you for all your support to-date.

Kate, Christophe, & Marcel



## WINNERS OF THE SEMAPHORE LIMERICK CONTEST

The Semaphore was honored and delighted when Hill beekeeper Kate McGee generously put us on the recipient list for her family's world-renowned Heslet Honey. In our Spring and Summer issues we announced the competition she proposed:

"I was hoping the Hill could have a limerick contest; the top three winners would get a jar of honey and their limericks published in the Semaphore. Limericks should be Hill related—people, places, or things."

Kate also generously agreed to judge the entries, which were forwarded to her with no identification of their authors. Here are the lucky winners.

### Author #1:

If you're hosting an out-of-town guest  
North Beach is truly the best  
Molinari has meat  
City Lights keeps the Beat  
Smells of coffee waft from the Trieste

\*\*\*

In North beach there are many a ghost  
In saloons they are making a toast  
To those great days of old  
To wild women and gold  
Three cheers for the Barbary Coast!

### Author #2:

The Hill hosts a flock of wild parrots  
The Steps house a bunch of wild parents  
The birds love to squawk  
The kids love to talk  
In the Garden they're planting wild carrots!

### Author #3:

The Filbert Steps climbers who drop in,  
Tongues panting, legs limp, and eyes poppin',  
Were caught unawares  
By the hundreds of stairs  
Never mentioned by Armistead Maupin.

Congratulations to the three closet poets who penned these affectionate odes to our beloved neighborhood: Tina Smelser, Judy Irving, and C J Verburg.





## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

by Stan Hayes, President  
stan.hayes@thd.org

Leaves turning, parrots tipsy on fermenting pyracantha, the sun finally escaping an endless-fog summer, a Harvest moon sparkling on the Bay. It's Fall on the Hill. The real Summer in San Francisco.

To start, I've got some exciting news! One of our important voices to you and the community, the THD website, is being redesigned and updated with an all-new look and functionality that we hope you'll find helpful and appealing. It's still a work-in-progress, but by the time you read this, we hope to have it up and running. If you have a moment, take it out for a test drive at *THD.org*. Let us know what you think, so we can make it even better.

Now, following what has become a tradition in this column, here are some THD highlights since our last issue. As before, I've used CAPITAL letters to match each with a goal in our bylaws.

We **BUILT COMMUNITY** on the Hill by enabling many of you to enjoy a delightful evening at the SF Symphony's All-San Francisco Concert, acquiring and distributing on a first-come-first-served basis as many of the hard-to-get tickets as we could. Hope you had a chance to attend!

We joined with others in SFPD Central Station's well-attended National Night Out event, bringing together police and neighbors to build a safer community. By the time this reaches you, we already will have had a busy schedule, with a neighborhood ballot party to untangle the dozens of ballot propositions impacting District 3, a Halloween book-launch party for *Semaphore* editor Carol Verburg's *Zapped: an Edgar Rowley Cape Cod Mystery*, and a staged reading of THD member Richard Slota's new play *Mascularity*. Coming up in December: another holiday-spirited annual celebration at Original Joe's. Check *THD.org* for details!

We **CELEBRATED THE HISTORY AND TRADITIONS** of the Hill by remembering the life of June Osterberg, one of THD's longest and most beloved members, who passed away in August. June was one of a kind, irreplaceable (see story on p. 5). Once called a "North Beach Treasure" by a fellow reporter, she was an activist, passionate about North Beach and the waterfront, at home both writing articles for *The Semaphore* and testifying at City Hall.

THD joined in celebrating Canessa Gallery's 50th birthday, including an auction and fundraising event to say thanks for the gallery's generous support of, to date, more than 600 sculptors, painters, photographers, and other artists.

We continued to celebrate this year the 30th anniversary of the Telegraph Hill Historic District (see accompanying story on p. 8).

We prepared and submitted letters supporting Legacy Business designations for Telegraph Hill-area businesses, including Pier 23 and Macchiarini Creative Design and Metalworks (see story on p. 12).

We **BEAUTIFIED AND IMPROVED** the Hill by actively participating in the planning process to improve Washington Square Park, including development of plans for the park's perimeter and children's playground. We worked with the City to improve park maintenance and access at Jack Early Park, and we are engaged in a new phase of planning for the park that includes development of a plan for planting. We worked with the Port to improve access signage for public open



The proposed construction routes for the 115 Telegraph Hill Blvd. project (see map) include a physically impossible drive down Kearny from Filbert to Broadway (see photo). PHOTO © JUDY IRVING.

space at the Pier 27 Cruise Terminal, including the design and use of wayfinding graphics.

We **PROTECTED THE UNIQUE CHARACTER** of the Hill by joining with Supervisor Peskin, MTA, and NBBA in a joint meeting organized by the Supervisor to examine the cumulative effects of numerous street-related measures in North Beach, including transit-only lanes on Columbus, pedestrian bulb-outs at intersections, sidewalk configuration changes, bicycle lanes, and roadway renovation.

We advocated for Hill residents with the SF Film Office and production companies filming television shows and commercials to ensure that adequate notice was given to affected residents, and measures were taken to anticipate and address traffic and access issues.

We continued our years-long efforts to oppose a large-sized multi-unit residential project at 115 Telegraph Hill Boulevard, adjacent to Coit Tower's Pioneer Park. Our efforts included pursuing legal appeals to project approvals, and challenging the project developer at neighborhood meetings on management of the more than 2 years of impending construction – which will have major impacts on quality of life on the Hill, including more than 700 trucks in and out and as many as 10-12 large cement trucks a day at times (see map), staging immediately next to Garfield Elementary School. If built, the project would block a major public view from lower Pioneer Park, a last undeveloped view that is one of the crown jewels of Telegraph Hill. For residents and the thousands of visitors who climb the Filbert Steps to Coit Tower each year, that view will be lost forever behind a wall of concrete.

We **ENGAGED IN CITY AFFAIRS** by contacting the City, the Port, developers, and others to express our concerns about three projects on Port-owned land in the Northeast waterfront, including the Teatro ZinZanni theatre/hotel project, the 88 Broadway affordable housing project, and the Jamestown Pier 29 bulkhead retail project. The THD board adopted a resolution opposing the Jamestown project, joining together with the Fisherman's Wharf Restaurant Association in opposition. We met with the interim executive director of the Port to discuss our concerns and suggestions about each of the three projects. THD board members undertook detailed review and comment on the Planning Department's rewrite of Article

7 of the Planning Code, which governs neighborhood commercial districts.

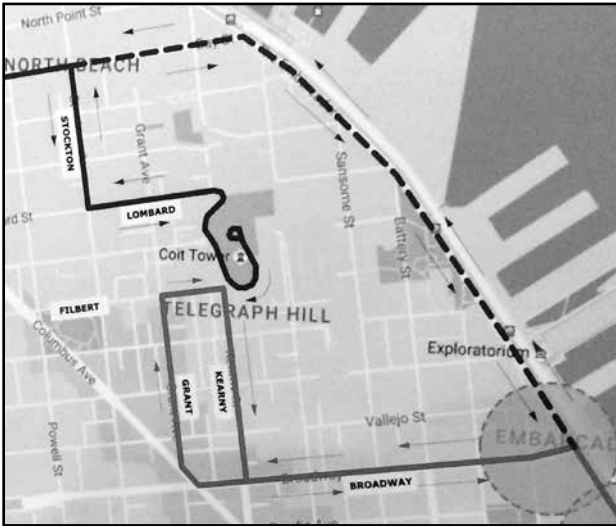
We submitted comments to the Planning Department on draft Urban Design Guidelines that the Department says, when adopted, will govern design review of new projects throughout the City. Calling for outreach to community and neighborhood organizations before adoption of the guidelines, something that the Department did not do in developing the draft, THD's letter led a number of other organizations to join THD in opposing the draft guidelines and caused the Department to significantly modify its plans. A resolution opposing the current draft was adopted by the THD board and subsequently by the multi-organization Coalition for San Francisco Neighborhoods.

We **STOOD UP FOR THE HILL** by advocating for Hill residents regarding the MTA's Residential Parking Permit Evaluation & Reform Project. We met with the head of residential permit parking regarding MTA's review and our concerns, making detailed comments and suggestions. We have members serving on community groups that include the Coit Tower Working Group (established by Supervisor Peskin), the Coalition for San Francisco Neighborhoods, the Northeast Waterfront Advisory Group, the Waterfront Plan Working Group, a Waterfront Plan Advisory Team, the SFPD's Central Station's Community Police Advisory Board, and the Friends of Washington Square.



That's just a sampling of what we've been doing on your behalf. As always, let me know how you think we're doing. What we're doing well, what we need to do better, or what you wish we were doing.

You can reach me at [Stan.Hayes@THD.org](mailto:Stan.Hayes@THD.org). ✦



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Please consider making a lasting commitment to the neighborhood you love. Include Telegraph Hill Dwellers Gift Planning Project in your estate planning.

Contact Jon Golinger for information: (415) 531-8585 or [jon.golinger@thd.org](mailto:jon.golinger@thd.org)



## DISTRICT 3 SUPERVISOR REPORT

by Aaron Peskin

Is it already time for another election?! It is, and this one's a doozy, folks.

Right out of the gate, I want to apologize to the voters for what I have repeatedly decried as a failure on the part of our local government to keep the ballot pared down to essential measures. The interminable length of the November 8th ballot reflects a shocking abdication of responsibility on behalf of our city leadership. Instead of doing the hard work of negotiating the City's priorities, a plethora of measures have been dumped onto the electorate with the expectation that you will wade through the quagmire of alphabet soup without experiencing severe voter fatigue. Here's my attempt at a life raft of recommendations, should you choose to take it:

### Housing Forward – Yes on C & M, No on P & U

This past June, Supervisor Jane Kim and I won a resounding victory for affordable housing with the passage of Proposition C, heralded as the nation's most cutting-edge affordable housing requirements. Voters responded loud and clear that developers can afford to contribute much more toward our affordable housing creation. And it's not enough to create new housing—we must preserve and protect our existing housing stock and tenants, as well.

I have identified one critical tool, **Proposition C**, to move this housing goal forward—*without raising taxes*.

The voters approved a hefty seismic safety bond in 1992, but almost 25 years later, it has remained largely untapped. City officials have been grappling with how to free the remaining \$261 million in unissued but

already-approved bond monies for city priorities, and I have proposed repurposing the bond for affordable housing rehabilitation, preservation and acquisition. By expanding the eligible uses of the seismic safety bond to also include fire, electrical and other safety code upgrades, we're able to prioritize residents' safety while preserving neighborhood character. Most importantly, it would be a valuable investment in our city's Small Site Acquisition & Rehabilitation program, which is sorely underfunded and has been a proven asset in protecting small multi-unit buildings which are particularly desirable for speculator "evict & flip" schemes.

I hope you'll join the good company of U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein, State Senator Mark Leno, former Mayor Art Agnos and my colleagues on the Board of Supervisors in voting for Prop C, the *only* measure on the ballot that actually creates affordable housing. It is a bond measure, so it will need to meet a 2/3 vote threshold.

I've also placed a Charter Amendment on the ballot, **Proposition M**, which would create a long-awaited independent **Housing & Development Commission** to finally provide oversight and transparency over two multi-million dollar city departments that largely operate behind closed doors: the Mayor's Office of Housing & Community Development and the Mayor's Office of Economic & Workforce Development. Prop M would also require the City to make good on its affordable housing commitments by requiring a strategic citywide housing plan, complete with an implementation timeline. The Commission would provide accountability around who is receiving critical development funding from the city and weed out political corruption and patronage. The public has been demanding a voice in the city's process for a very long time, and it's time to open the doors and let the sunshine in—before another Super Bowl, America's Cup, sports arena, Millennium Tower or Olympics bid is ramrodded through on the public's dime to the public's detriment. The bottom line is: if you're happy with the status quo, don't vote for Prop M. If you think it's time to shake up the status quo and provide checks & balances to an out-of-control system, this is one idea to ensure *the public* has a place in the process. It's past time for the City to be accountable to the people we represent.

# WADING THROUGH THE NOV. BALLOT'S ALPHABET SOUP

I'm proud to have the support of six members of the Board of Supervisors, former Mayor Art Agnos, former City Attorney Louise Renne, the Affordable Housing Alliance and the San Francisco Democratic Party. You wanted reform—here it is!

You will continue to be bombarded with campaign propaganda this season from the **SF Realtors Association**, among others, who will claim that they are pushing an "affordability" agenda of their own. Don't buy the spin.

When the Realtors aren't funding massive opposition campaigns on everything from Ellis Act eviction reform to California state affordable housing requirements, they are trying to stop the creation of affordable housing here in San Francisco. Before the first voter information pamphlet was finalized, the SF Realtors had already raised half a million dollars for P and U. As of this publication, the National Board of Realtors had put in \$720,000 into Props P and U. The money avalanche is insane.

Here is the truth: the Realtors have put Propositions P and U on the ballot as an attack on low-income and working class people—and to line their own pockets. It's as simple as that. **Proposition P** is a disingenuous and cynical measure that would mandate that the city only pursue affordable housing proposals that generate 3 or more bids—it's been rare for the city to receive more than 2 bids in an extremely expensive market, and this would effectively halt the development of affordable housing, according to the Mayor's *own Department of Housing*. My colleague in District 2 continues to cite anonymous "experts" who think otherwise, but the experts interviewed by San Francisco's own periodical of record have argued the opposite. The type of affordable housing funded by the City is highly specialized, and if there were 3 or more outfits that did transitional-age youth housing or formerly homeless senior housing very well, then they would be applying.

**Proposition U** effectively repeals June's Prop C, the Inclusionary Affordable Housing Act, which actually *created* a middle-income requirement for the first time. Prop C allowed the Board to adjust these requirements according to market cycles, and was overwhelmingly embraced by the voters. Proposition U would not only eliminate low-income housing by creating a new eligibility floor well out of range of most San Franciscans, but it would do it retroactively. Talk about wicked: there are over 800 units of existing low-income housing in the city that would become ineligible to occupy. And who would profit? The developers who would get to build housing for higher-income brackets and the Realtors who stand to make millions in commissions.

This November, for affordability and accountability, I enthusiastically endorse the "Housing Forward" slate: **YES on C + M** and **NO on P + U**!

For a full rundown on some of my other ballot thoughts, check out [www.aaron2016.com](http://www.aaron2016.com) or sign up for our newsletter.

See you at the polls!



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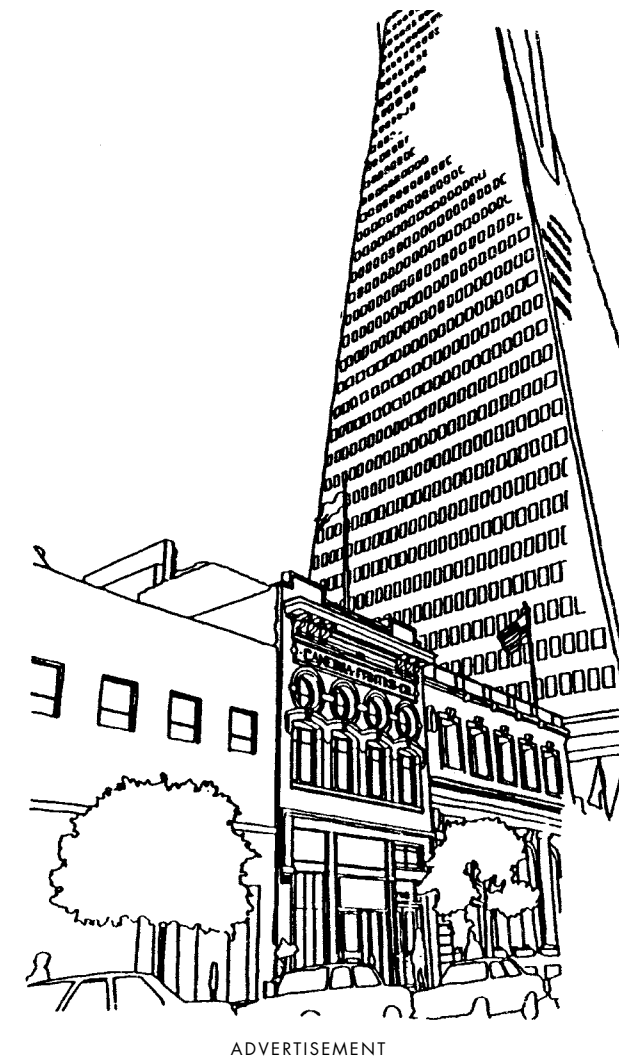


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# TELEGRAPH HILL CLIFF TALES

by Judy Irving, Vice President  
judy.irving@thd.org

## THE PAST

“Of all the scoundrels in San Francisco who persistently flouted the law, the Gray Brothers were perhaps the worst,” according to David Myrick, author of *San Francisco’s Telegraph Hill*. In the early 1890s George and Harry Gray operated a quarry on the east side of the Hill, blasting out and crushing rock for ship ballast and road construction. The rock consisted of basalt mixed with shale—“a lot of unstable shale which was susceptible to slippage, especially after a rain, a factor causing many problems....” (Myrick, p. 56).

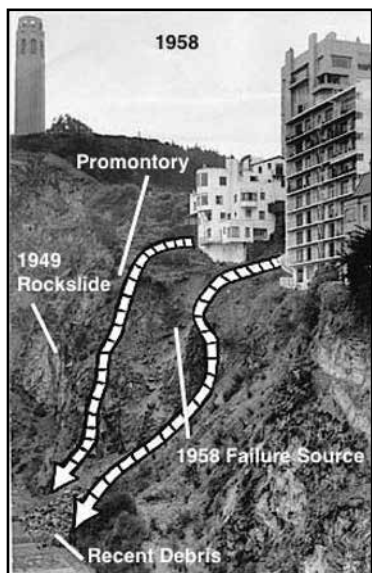
Explosions set off by the Gray Brothers undermined and destroyed houses on Vallejo, Green, Union, Calhoun, Montgomery, Greenwich, and other streets, leading to a series of lawsuits and restraining orders, which did nothing to deter the quarrymen. Despite a 1909 court order directing the brothers to cease blasting, they set off an explosion on the 4th of July, timed precisely to be drowned out by the Presidio’s celebratory cannon fire. But showers of rock and debris enraged Hill residents and led to more lawsuits. In 1914, nearing bankruptcy, the company was finally done in by a Sicilian quarry worker: Joseph Lococo shot and killed George Gray after being denied his wages for months. By then everyone knew about the Brothers’ business ethics. Lococo was acquitted, and the blasting ended.

## THE PRESENT

By now Telegraph Hill “has been crumbling for over a century,” according to Greg Crump of the City’s Department of Public Works, and the quarry cliffs on its east face continue to wreak havoc on homes and businesses.

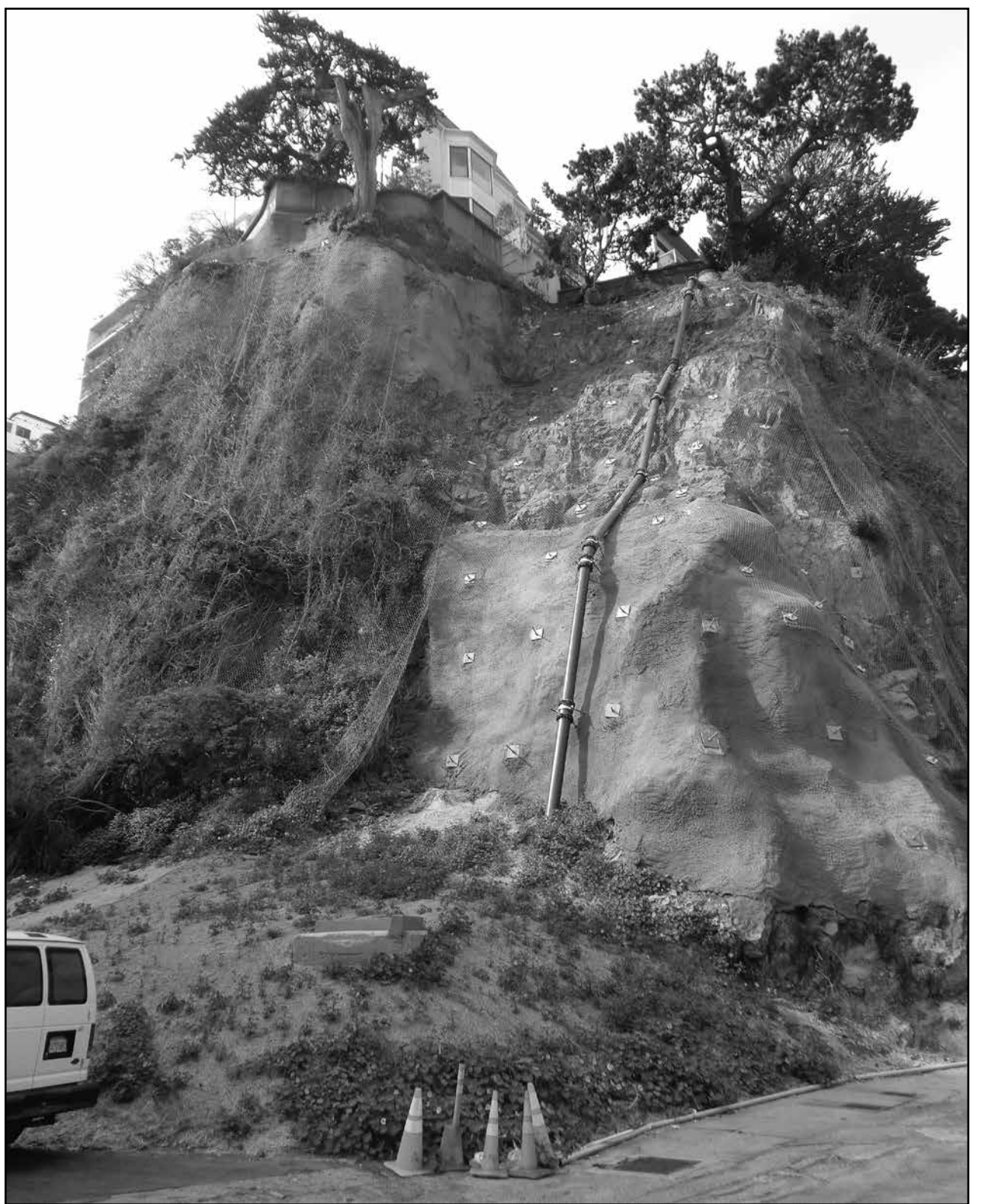
Rock slides caused a closure of Green to Greenwich Streets in 1958 and a forced demolition of an Alta Street apartment building in 1992. According to *The New York Times*, “Huge chunks of the hillside tore from beneath the building, raining 1,250 tons of earth on the office building below. Today, sending down a comparable torrent of debris, the building shifted several more inches, with a balcony and part of a retaining wall crashing down the cliff. Even if the building itself does not follow, its owner is likely to demolish it.” In fact the city did it for him, and sent him the bill.

In February 2007, residents and businesses on Broadway below Vallejo were also forced to evacuate. According to *SFGate*, “Seven buildings were rendered uninhabitable when a 75-foot-wide chunk of Telegraph Hill slid down a granite and sandstone slope above Broadway about 3:30 AM. Among the buildings that city officials declared off-limits was a 45-unit condo-



2014: Work begins on east cliff face above Lombard Street

3 PHOTOS COURTESY OF SF PUBLIC WORKS



As of October 2016, stabilization work has been completed above Chestnut St.

PHOTO © JUDY IRVING

minium complex at 455 Vallejo St. perched at the edge of the newly formed cliff.”

Yet another major Telegraph Hill landslide occurred in 2012, when minivan-sized chunks of rock crushed cars below. According to CBS news, “Boulders tumbled down the rain-soaked hillside above Lombard Street near Winthrop Street around 9:35 AM, crushing a car and causing a partial evacuation of 220 and 240 Lombard Street, the Parc Telegraph condominium complex.” A slide in 2014 brought down a giant rock that rolled onto the steps of a neighboring business on Chestnut Street.

All this slipping and sliding led to the “Telegraph Hill Rock Slope Safety Improvement Project,” in progress since late 2014, a full century after the Gray Brothers ceased blasting. For readers curious about the huge crane parked near Coit Tower and the workers who’ve been rock-climbing on the cliffs for over a year, here are some construction details provided by DPW’s Greg Crump:

- Phase One (November 2014 to June 2015) secured about half of the hillside with the installation of more than 400 anchors into the rock. Phase Two should be

complete by the end of 2016. Stabilization work also occurred at Chestnut Street near Kearny Street that involved the bolting of 44 anchors into the hillside. A crane on the east side of the Coit Tower parking lot helps crews get to hard-to-reach places and install more than 220 rock anchors. A wire mesh and shotcrete at select locations will complete the safety repairs.

- In July, one worker was not clipped in properly after dirt had accumulated on his rope and gear. He was injured after sliding down the hillside about 30-60 feet. Fortunately, the worker will be fine. Besides that, the construction has been injury free.
- Public Works is overseeing the construction and Drill Tech is the contractor carrying out the work. Total budget: \$9.4 million. The contractor is in the final stages of drilling the deep holes and filling them with the steel rods. Next they will be hanging the wire mesh and securing it to the hillside.

You can sign up for regular construction updates at <http://tel-hill-improvements.com/>.



The 2012 rock slide down rain-soaked cliffs forced evacuations at Lombard and Chestnut.



The 2015 Chestnut Street rockslide closed businesses.

# REMEMBERING JUNE A. OSTERBERG

by Tony Long

Let's raise a final glass of Aquavit, shall we, to the memory of June Osterberg, who knew North Beach better than any of us.

In paying tribute to this cheerful, engaging, and occasionally infuriating friend, I want to first say that I was not June's oldest friend or her best friend in North Beach. I didn't join her weekly group dinners at Il Pollaio and I wasn't among her regular drinking buddies at Capp's Corner (although we tipped a few there on occasion). Our connection was journalism—she'd done a lifetime of it and I'd had a bellyful at the *Examiner*. It was common ground. And on that basis, our friendship blossomed.

\*\*\*

It must have been sometime in late 2002 (I was drinking pretty heavily then so precision is elusive) when June buttonholed Mary Nelson and me and said something to the effect of, "Hey, kids, let's start a newspaper."

At the time June was writing a column for another North Beach monthly but she felt the neighborhood

column while peering over our shoulders as a kind of *éminence grise*. Tiny she may have been but she had no trouble peering, let me tell you.

(I would be remiss here without acknowledging all the help we received from other neighborhood worthies, as well as several of my young reporters at *Wired* who willingly chased down stories without pay, making me, shamefully, the modest forerunner of Ariana Huffington.)

Disagreements are inevitable with any creative collaboration, and ours was no different. It began straight away with the naming of the paper. I wanted to christen it the *North Beach Strangler*, which after several glasses of cheap red sounded like just the name for the ballsy, take-no-prisoners

muckraker I envisioned

us being. June wasn't having it and neither was Mary. Outvoted, I sulked for a while before agreeing that the *North Beach Beat* was a perfectly fine name. And so it was.

Our first edition rolled off the presses in April 2003 and I'll admit it: we beamed over that pile of newsprint like it was our first-born child. June's first column captured a little of that gooey feeling:

"Ah, newspapers.

"Not radio, not television with its talking heads, not the Internet (at least not yet).

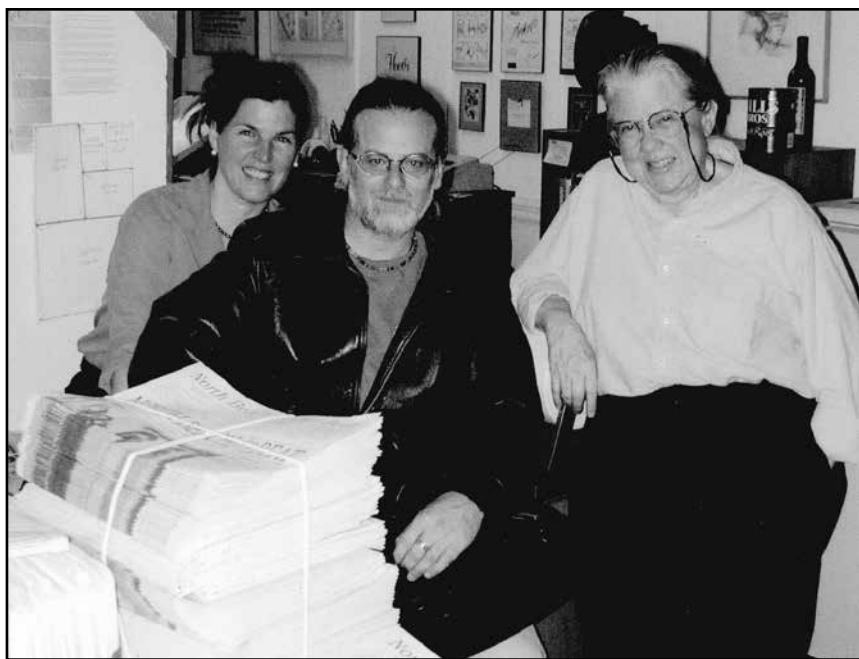
"With Volume One, No. 1, the *North Beach Beat* joins a 156-year line of newspapers in this little part of a shrinking world.

"We do this because we love

North Beach, and we love to tell its news."

And of course June, as usual, was right.

Another bone of contention between June and me was editing. I was an editor by training and temperament and June (to put it mildly) did not like anyone messing with her copy. When I saw writing that I thought could be improved, either by tightening or rewriting, I did what came naturally. So did she. No



Publishers of the *North Beach Beat* welcoming the April 2003 first edition off the press into their Maybeck Building workspace on Stockton Street: Mary Nelson, Business Manager; Tony Long, Editor in Chief; and June A. Osterberg, Associate Editor. (June insisted on the A in her byline.)

PHOTOGRAPHER UNKNOWN.



June Osterberg's collection of buttons and matches on offer to the guests at her September 6th memorial.

PHOTO © JULIE JAYCOX

needed an alternative voice—a voice, shall we say, skewed a little more in favor of "the people." I proved an easy recruit since I was languishing at *Wired.com* by then, pretending to care about technology journalism when, pretty clearly, I didn't.

Mary minded the money, I became editor in chief, and June batted out her monthly North Beach history

blood was spilled but I've never seen anybody's neck turn as red as hers did when she was angry.

In the end, though, what emerged was a pretty decent neighborhood newspaper that gave its all until the money ran out. And June gets a ton of credit for that.

\*\*\*

Of course, June Osterberg was more than a journalist when it came to her corner of heaven. She was also an activist—a "fierce advocate," to toss out a journalistic cliché—for her neighborhood. So it's no surprise that she was among the earliest members of the Telegraph Hill Dwellers, an outfit that turned up here in 1954, two years after June did.

Over the decades she threw herself tirelessly into issues like preservation and urban planning that THD sees as red meat. She was especially interested in the northern waterfront and its well being, having covered shipping news early in her career.

Now the ships are gone and June is, too, but the waterfront soldiers on under the watchful eye of THD.

\*\*\*

I visited June in the hospital not long before her death. We talked a bit of old times. I reminded her what a pain in the ass she was to edit, which earned a hearty laugh and I swear her eyes were twinkling. Then I watched her wolf down her lunch and had a hard time believing that she was sick, let alone dying.

June was philosophical about death, almost off-hand, really.

"I've had a good life," she told me cheerfully. "I have nothing to regret." And we agreed that she was lucky to be young in North Beach when she was, when North Beach was the most interesting neighborhood in the most interesting city west of anywhere.

After she died I heard someone make a reference to her "passing away." The journalist in me recoiled. You don't "pass away" in journalism. You don't "go to a better place" or "join the feathered choir." You don't use euphemisms. You die. Period.

I was almost loutish enough to say so but something held me back. While I'm sure June would have agreed with me in principle, she was also extremely gracious, tactful and polite. She certainly wouldn't have intruded into another's grief just to make some stupid point. If I had gone and opened my big mouth she would have chewed me out until I heard it all the way from the feathered choir, I'm sure.

So June died. But we're all the better for her having been here. And we'll be lucky if they say that about us some day.

✂

Tony Long has recently published *North Beach Stories*, a collection of atmospheric short fiction. A copy may be obtained for a meager 15 bucks by contacting the author at [alittlechinmusic@gmail.com](mailto:alittlechinmusic@gmail.com) or running into him on the street.



At Barbary Coast on Green Street, an appreciative audience of friends and family listen to reminiscences and mourn June's passing, just days after her front-page story "Remembering the Palace Theatre" appeared in the Summer 2016 *Semaphore*.

PHOTO © JULIE JAYCOX



# CANESSA GALLERY: LOOKING BACK, LOOKING FORWARD



by Zach Stewart

**R**od Freebairn Smith can tell you some funny stories about how one of our classmates at Stanford planted the Transamerica Pyramid onto the Monkey Block site, and I thank the Telegraph Hill Dwellers of long ago for stopping the highrises at Washington Street; otherwise, as Fred Crisp observed, “Canessa Gallery would be at the bottom of the elevator shaft in a 40-story building.”

When three of us first saw the interior of Canessa it was full of letterpress machines owned by the Canessa Stamperia. Both the printshop and the Black Cat below it closed in 1965 and Merrill Jew talked my partner Dan Osborne and me into moving into the “Canessa Printing Company” space. I was dead set against the idea. Now fifty years later, Julie Jaycox, Richard Zimmerman, and Carolyn Miller put together Canessa Gallery’s Fiftieth Anniversary Show, and at the age of eighty-eight I have happily watched it happen without participating. In fact, Canessa Gallery’s long run is the result of a hundred or so volunteers helping four hundred or so artists have shows in the gallery. Over fifty of them were in the Fiftieth Anniversary Show.

One of Canessa’s endearing traits is that the art never sells and few people come to the openings and it is mostly on the verge of going broke or being evicted in favor of a lawyer or realtor who wants to buy the building as a bauble for the family trust. Canessa and all of us living in North Beach need to give the Telegraph Hill Dwellers a huge thank-you for stopping the freeway from landing on Alcatraz and plowing through Fisherman’s Wharf—to quote Fred Crisp again, “Zach, your house on Water Street would have been under an elevated freeway.” I guess the amazing members of the Telegraph Hill Dwellers of the Sixties need to have a plaque commemorating them for their priceless contributions to the City and County of San Francisco....✦

Zach Stewart surrounded by friends at Canessa Gallery’s 50th anniversary party.

PHOTOS BY CAROL VERBURG



Works donated by the artists were displayed above bidding sheets, with all profits going to this not-for-profit gallery.



On Sept. 9, a crowd of artists, friends, and well-wishers (including many THD members) celebrated the gallery’s 50th anniversary.



# FAREWELL TO THE WORLD'S GREATEST GARBAGEMAN

by Paul Scott

I should have had an inkling when the first guest to show up was carrying a Costco-sized bottle of Hornitos tequila.

A couple of weeks back, a few of us had the good fortune of toasting the recent retirement of a Telegraph Hill legend: Dave FRANZOIA, the world's greatest garbage-man. For those of you who don't know him, Dave worked the steps of Telegraph Hill and the surrounding area for over 22 years. For the better part of those many years, Dave would dump our bins onto burlap tarps and haul huge bundles of garbage up the steps like a modern day Sisyphus—up, down, then repeat. In the last few years, when the job got “easier,” he would haul 64-gallon bins up, one step at a time, huffing and grunting the whole way.

Given how hard he had worked and what an unrelentingly great guy he was—always quick with his big smile and enthusiastic hello—we figured it might be fun if we had a little retirement party for Dave on the Hill. Fortunately, he was game and a bunch of other neighbors agreed to show up as well. What followed, though, was far better than I imagined, really more in the category of a life lesson than a retirement party.

Dave invited a few of his colleagues and family to come by, and if you didn't already know this, let me tell you right now: garbagemen know how to party. (The



Longtime Telegraph Hill garbageman Dave FRANZOIA also was honored with a 2014 THD “Hero of the Hill” award.

PHOTOS BY CAROL VERBURG

Hornitos was only one of many wounded soldiers that day). At least Dave and his friends do. But the real revelation for me that day was how truly Dave also knows how to live.

During the course of the party, Dave regaled us with stories of the umpteen different times he had broken, dislocated, or seriously torn some part of his body on the job. Whether it was getting thrown off of a truck, falling down steel stairs, or picking up cars to get them out of the way, Dave had seen it all over the years. But he would always end his story with a grin: “Then I finished the route and came back to work X weeks later after I healed up.” Even the day of the party itself, Dave rolled in with a fresh knee replacement (a parting gift from our stairs no doubt), but he was keen to tell us how he had already traversed the City that day on his new knee with nary a worry in the world, a million

plans in the hatching, his smile larger than ever.

And when you looked around at Dave's family and friends, it seemed he had infected them with the same indomitable spirit. The same broad shoulders, booming voices, and huge appetites for life. I don't think I've been to a party in some time where the smiles were as big and the passion in people's blood so plain.

So off into retirement Dave has gone, but his days on the Hill and his warmth will always remain. As the renowned author (and our neighbor) Phil Cousineau once famously put it, “Myths are experienced in ordinary life, as everyday epiphanies.” In our case, it was a bit different. We experienced the myth of Dave FRANZOIA in our ordinary lives, but it took until now, for me at least, after he was gone, to have that epiphany. Long live the legend of Dave FRANZOIA.



Host Paul Scott and cake-carrier Sadie Scott help Dave FRANZOIA celebrate his retirement.



Joe Luttrell  
treasurer@thd.org

## TREASURER'S REPORT

THD operates on a fiscal year (rather than a calendar year), from April 1 to March 31. So we are now about midway through that year, which started on April 1, 2016.

A proposed budget was submitted to the Board at its May meeting, discussed then, and unanimously adopted. It proposed essentially a break-even year, with revenues and expenses of about \$30,000.

The basic assumptions in the budget are that dues and revenues will remain constant, as will costs for the Semaphore, and that income and expense for social and arts and culture events will be equal. So far this fiscal year, this has proved true, and THD remains in a modestly healthy fiscal state, with an extremely modest net profit through August 31 of just under \$100.



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# CELEBRATING 30 YEARS OF PROTECTING THE H

by Nancy Shanahan, THD Historian

No part of San Francisco has a more colorful history than our own northeast corner, where so many of the City’s characters have made their homes, their livings, and their marks.

Telegraph Hill was a natural landmark long before that name (or the telegraph) existed. In the previous Semaphore (Summer 2016), “Happy 30th Anniversary, Telegraph Hill Historic District” described how the buildings on the crest and northeastern slope of Telegraph Hill were saved from the surrounding devastation of the 1906 earthquake and fire. Fifty years later, Telegraph Hill Dwellers was founded to prevent the destruction of what remained of the Hill’s late-Gold-Rush heritage. Thirty years ago, in 1986, the City granted protection to some of its oldest and most distinguished buildings by designating the Telegraph Hill Historic District.

## A BRIEF TOUR OF THE SURVIVORS

Which building in the Telegraph Hill Historic District is the oldest? According to Anne Bloomfield, it’s hard to be sure. Both 1301 Montgomery and 291 Union appear on the U.S. Coast Survey map of 1853. That makes them both older than all but two buildings in the Jackson Square Historic District.

### 1301 Montgomery Street—Dr. Robinson’s Vegetable Bitters (1853 or earlier)

Although now covered in stucco, its pre-1870 photo shows a simple brick commercial building like many in Jackson Square—possibly the City’s oldest extant brick building. What was a commercial building doing more than 200 feet above the waterfront? Whether it was built as a factory, a brewery, or for some other purpose, its first known use was likely the salesroom and “manufactory” for Dr. David G. “Yankee” Robinson’s celebrated “Vegetable Bitters” advertised in the 1852 San Francisco Directory as “composed entirely of California vegetables.” This brick building also housed a barber shop in 1850 and a grocery store from 1881 to 1886. In the 1920s it was a pool hall inside “John Ortega’s Soft Drinks,” the Prohibition equivalent of a saloon. Dr. Robinson lived at

9 Calhoun Terrace—we’ll learn more about him below.

### 291 Union Street—The Cooney House and Store (1853)

The first and for a while the only grocery store on top of the Hill was at 291 Union, in the oldest surviving residential building in San Francisco. The land at 291 Union was granted to wharf owner Benjamin R. Buckelew by the Alcalde of San Francisco in 1848, and Buckelew sold the land to John Cooney in 1850 for \$140. According to David Myrick, who tells many stories of the Cooney family in his book *San Francisco’s Telegraph Hill*, John was born in Ireland. His wife, Hannah, and their first two children were born in England, and the next two in Australia. The wood for the house accompanied the Cooneys from Australia, and they are said to have lived in a tent on the lot during construction to prevent its theft. Once the house was completed in 1853, Cooney opened the grocery store. “Merchandise in the store wavered from groceries to ‘Yankee Notions’ —ribbons, laces, widow’s weeds and various drugs housed in little glass cases—usually imported from England in spite of the generic term.” (Myrick, page 168).

The Cooney store lasted until 1906, but the heirs kept the building in the family until 1937. It was the first of Telegraph Hill’s multi-storied, balconied houses. Its Italianate “false front” was likely added in the 1880s to modernize the house. The Cooney family also purchased the land next door at 287-289 Union from Buckelew, where they built the Gothic Revival Cottages (c1857) used as rental units.

### 9 Calhoun Terrace—Dr. Robinson’s Residence (1854)

The third oldest building in the historic district is 9 Calhoun. Although in 1880 there were five houses on the west side of Calhoun and seven on the east, quarrying of Telegraph Hill by the infamous Gray Brothers (see p. 4) had the greatest impact here. By 1899 all of the houses on the east side had been destroyed. The only one remaining today is 9 Calhoun, built by Dr. David G. “Yankee” Robinson in 1854. In addition to



9 Calhoun Terrace (1854)

PHOTOS ON THIS PAGE © JULIE JAYCOX

his famous Vegetable Bitters, the WPA *San Francisco Theatre Research*, published in 1938, chronicles Dr. Robinson’s history as a physician, comedian, and theater entrepreneur. On July 4, 1850, he opened a 200-seat “Dramatic Museum” on California Street with a localized adaptation of *Seeing the Elephant*, a popular circus deception. An actor and playwright himself, Robinson also started the first drama school in San Francisco.

After these first three, historian Anne Bloomfield’s 1985 report for THD presents the construction sequence from 1857 to 1870 of the surviving buildings within the District boundaries. Although all contribute to the historic character and significance of the district, several of these survivors deserve special notice.

### 31 Alta Street (1858)

As early photos show, the houses on the south side of Alta provided residents with unobstructed views of the waterfront, a distinct advantage for waterfront workers. The building at 31 Alta, a three-and-a-half story, gable-roofed dwelling with a two-level balcony, appears prominently in these photos. Built by Captain Richard Andrews in 1858, it has scarcely been altered since. Its occupants included a sailmaker in the late 1880s and three bachelor brothers who worked as watchmen on the docks in the 1920s. In the late 1920s it became the colorful Telegraph Hill Tavern, advertised by its proprietress as having “all the atmosphere of the Montmartre with a Marine View.” (Myrick, pages 179-180)

Aside from being a gem in the Telegraph Hill Historic District, 31 Alta features prominently in many books documenting the historic and architectural treasures of San Francisco. It is listed in the *National Trust for Historic Preservation’s Guide to San Francisco*, Myrick’s *San Francisco’s Telegraph Hill*, and is rated as a significant structure in *Here Today*, an official architectural survey adopted by the Board of Supervisors. Thanks go to Bradford Wilmore, a former president of THD, who carefully restored this handsome three-story home for his family in 2005.

### 1254-1256 Montgomery (c1865)

This flat front Italianate building on the southeast corner of Montgomery and Union is listed on the



1301 Montgomery Street (c1853 or earlier)



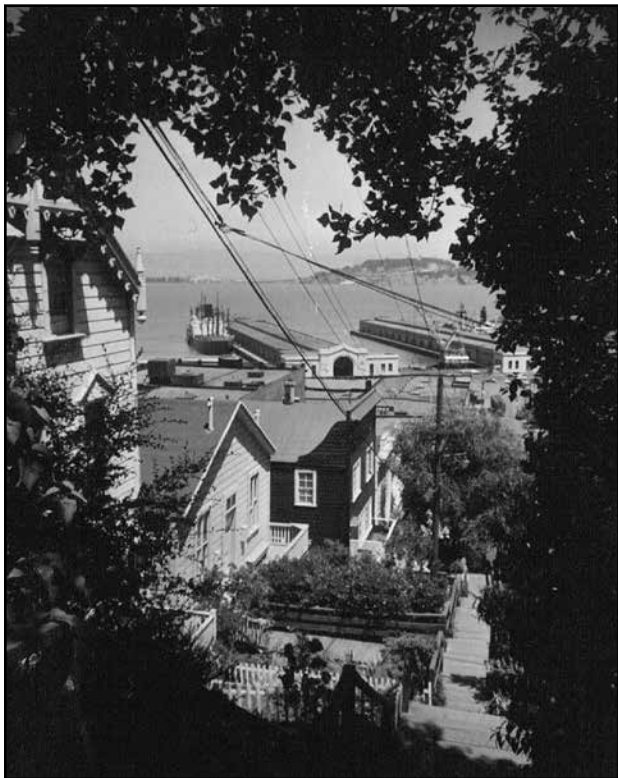
1254-1256 Montgomery Street (c1865)

# HILL'S HISTORY—A BRIEF TOUR OF THE SURVIVORS

National Register of Historic Places (#79000532) for its architectural and historical significance.

An 1861 lithograph shows the former Hudson's Windmill on this site. The windmill was probably destroyed by fire on July 4, 1861, along with many other structures on Telegraph Hill. Later that year, the construction of 1254-1256 Montgomery began, first as a one-story structure, with a second story added sometime before 1886. Originally it was a rooming house with twenty-five rooms, each with a door to a hall, and most with additional doors to any adjoining room in case a family wished to rent more than one room. Architecturally it is an interesting variation of the formal Italianate style of the 1860s, altered to meet the needs of a rooming house. Later the building was converted to six railroad flats, with baths and kitchens squeezed in at the rear of each flat. The only significant change since then was in 1939 when the City lowered the street in front of the building by twelve feet.

The building is also important as one of the Telegraph Hill survivors of the 1906 fire. A tenant, Giovanni Doneri, with his oldest son and neighbors, cooled the walls of the building with burlap sacks soaked in wine from casks in the basement. In 1956 it was saved from demolition to make way for an 11-story apartment building, a project halted with the help of the newly formed THD.



Filbert Steps in the 1950s PHOTO COURTESY OF SCHEIN & SCHEIN

## THE FILBERT STEPS—THE HEART OF THE DISTRICT

Pre-1870s Telegraph Hill is preserved most completely along the north side of the Filbert Steps (below Montgomery) and along Napier Lane. Noteworthy examples follow.

### 228 Filbert (1869)

This Gothic Revival house is the top contender for the most outstanding contributor to the District. Built in 1869 by Phillip Brown, a seaman turned stevedore, this house is an expression of a simple "Carpenter Gothic" style. Although the form of the house suggests there was a store in the basement, David Myrick explains in his book *San Francisco's Telegraph Hill* that because Phillip Brown decreed that his wife was not to be a shopkeeper, the basement was used, instead, as the family dining room. (Myrick, page 187) It is sometimes incorrectly referred to as the "Captain's House" because Captain Laughton was a frequent visitor who spent so much time on the front porch that people assumed it was his home.

### 224 Filbert (1859)

Built by James Callaghan, a laborer and later foreman of a warehouse on the waterfront, this house is a



Telegraph Hill, circa 1885, showing 230 Filbert (1858) and 228 Filbert (1869) on the Filbert Steps (PHOTO CREDIT: SAN FRANCISCO HISTORY CENTER, SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC LIBRARY, AAC-1358)

good example of the simplest type of home of its period. The roofline is unusual, being in the pattern of an old barn roof, with the center peaked up sharply and the outer edges at a flatter pitch.

### 10 Napier (1857)

This is the oldest house on Napier Lane (formerly Billings Place), the only boardwalk surviving in the District and one of the few left in San Francisco. Vying for the fourth oldest in the District and essentially unchanged, it was originally the home of Mortimer (Murty) and John Clark, teamster & laborer at Greenwich Dock Warehouse. Its Italianate false front likely dates from about 1887, but the outline and roof

of the original 1857 board-frame cottage remain.

## CHANGES TO TELEGRAPH HILL

The fire of 1906 was an architectural, social, and historical turning point for the Hill. While adjacent North Beach was quickly rebuilt in a different style, Telegraph Hill, meanwhile, continued to exist in its pre-quake world until the 1930s. Artists and writers, attracted by its cheap rents and scenic qualities, began moving to the hill during the 1920s. Despite their unconventional pursuits, they blended in with the working class neighborhood. And because vehicular access was restricted to Union Street, infill development was limited to small-scale construction stylistically compatible with the earliest development on the hill.

Telegraph Hill's geographic isolation ended with street grading, new concrete retaining walls, sidewalks, and streetlights—projects funded by the Work Projects Administration (WPA). The paving of Montgomery and Alta Streets in 1931, the construction of Calhoun Terrace in 1939-1940, and the establishment of a municipal bus route to Coit Tower in 1939 (now the Coit 39), heralded new development in the Modern style of the late 1930s.

## MODERN STYLE AFTER 1935

Just before World War II, the Hill gained a dozen new buildings of experimental designs in the Modern style. These buildings are significant for their architects who, although unknown at the time, later achieved fame. These structures emphasize views and horizontality and relate positively to their hillsides and gardens.

The most celebrated of these is the Kahn House at 66 Calhoun. Built in 1939, it was designed by Richard Neutra, one of the founders of the International Style. Next door to the Kahn House is Ian Hoeffler's apartment building at 38-50 Calhoun, which was built in 1937 in the Modern style and steps dramatically down the hillside. Its architect never achieved fame, but its tenants did: The apartment at 42 Calhoun is known as the temporary residence, during 1940, of Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera.



10 Napier Lane (1857)

PHOTO CREDIT: JULIE JAYCOX





Duck Murals at 60 Alta Street, known as the “Duck House” (1935); Painted by Helen Forbes and Dorothy Puccinelli

PHOTO COMPOSITE CREDIT: JULIE JAYCOX

Architect William Wurster, founder of the Second Bay Area Tradition Style, designed the Duck House at 60 Alta for muralist Helen Forbes in 1935. This dwelling takes its name from the duck frescoes painted by Helen Forbes and Dorothy Puccinelli using a traditional Italian technique. Forbes and Puccinelli also painted the murals that adorn the Mothers Building at the SF Zoo. Mayris Chaney (Mrs. Hershey Martin), a renowned dancer, worked with Eleanor Roosevelt in the Office of Civilian Defense and was one of her closest friends for almost twenty years. She often entertained the First Lady at 60 Alta. And finally, it was in the Duck House in the 1970s that Armistead Maupin began writing *Tales of the City*, as he watched the activities below on Napier Lane. Among his guests there was Rock Hudson. Maupin also lived for a while on the Filbert Steps at 226A Filbert.

One of the most well-known and photographed buildings in the District is the Art Moderne building at 1360 Montgomery, famous as the setting for the 1947 movie *Dark Passage*, starring Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall. Although the architect never became well known, Irvine Goldstine designed this 1936 building with contractors-owners Jack and Ralph Malloch. Etched into the glass over the central entrance are a gazelle, palm trees, and ocean waves. Sgraffito wall decorations, created by carving into several layers of cement, adorn both the Montgomery and Filbert sides and include a worker holding the world above the Bay Bridge. The etching and wall decorations are by Alfred Dupont. ✂

### Sources:

- Myrick, David F, *San Francisco's Telegraph Hill* (San Francisco: Telegraph Hill Dwellers, City Lights Foundation, 1987, 2001)
- Bloomfield, Anne, “Telegraph Hill District, San Francisco” (Report prepared for The Landmarks Advisory Board, 1985)



Dorothy Puccinelli (right) and Helen Forbes (left) completing their egg tempura mural in the Mother House at Fleishhacker Zoo (1938)  
PHOTO CREDIT: SAN FRANCISCO HISTORY CENTER, SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC LIBRARY, MOR-0742



Malloch Building at 1360 Montgomery (1936)

PHOTO CREDIT: JULIE JAYCOX



A 1950s view from the end of Alta Street showing the Filbert Steps cottages and Napier Lane, including (from left to right) 230, 228, 226 and 224 Filbert, and a view down Napier Lane  
PHOTO CREDIT: COURTESY OF SCHEIN & SCHEIN





## PARKS, TREES, & BIRDS REPORT

by Carlo Arreglo, Committee Co-Chair  
carlo.arreglo@thd.org

My report this time is inspired by a recent trip to Indonesia. I had only a couple of days to go birdwatching and I was guided by a ranger in Bali Barat National Park in the extreme northwest corner of the island of Bali. As might be expected, the bird life was breathtaking; I saw 95 “lif-ers,” in birder parlance, which means species that one sees for the first time. And it was educational to visit a national park in Indonesia. In many ways, Bali Barat National Park shares similarities with Point Reyes National Seashore, where I work as a park ranger: preserved coastline, miles of hiking trails, ranching areas, and charismatic fauna—in this case, the critically



Pt. Reyes National Seashore.

PHOTOS BY CARLO ARREGLO

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## SOCIAL & PROGRAM COMMITTEE REPORT

by Marilee Gaffney, Committee Chair  
marilee.gaffney@thd.org

The Telegraph Hill Dwellers had a great turnout for the All San Francisco Symphony Concert on September 8. The Symphony’s special program for service and neighborhood organizations featured both American and Italian favorites from Copland to Rossini.

Coming up is the Annual Telegraph Hill Dwellers Christmas Party on Sunday, December 11 at Original Joe’s. Save the date, and more details to come soon! ✂

## BIRDING AT BALI BARAT



Bali Barat National Park in Bali, Indonesia

endangered Bali Myna, of which fewer than 100 exist in the world. But what I found the most striking wasn’t seeing two of these rare birds in the wild, or the many monkeys running rampant in the numerous temples throughout the park. Unfortunately, it was the trash! The abundance and prevalence of refuse was appalling and heartbreaking.

But it’s easy, perhaps even facile, to compare. It’s a lot harder to examine differences of culture, economics, education, infrastructure, property, and even ocean currents to explain the stark differences in park maintenance. I guess I have been too steeped in the culture and message of America’s parks. After all, this year is the centennial of the National Park Service, which has consistently urged people to conserve and protect our parks for present and future generations. Of course, this

is not always successful; people continue to litter trails, fly drones in parks, and “tag” rock formations. But I think, overall, the majority of people here do try.

As I walk around Telegraph Hill and bird my patches during this fall migration season hoping to see my first-of-season Golden-crowned Sparrow, Fox Sparrow, and Townsend’s Warbler, I wince at the trash overflowing the garbage cans on the weekends but take some comfort in knowing that most of us try. If you’d like to help preserve Telegraph Hill and our local parks and shorelines, please consider joining a local habitat restoration project with the Golden Gate Audubon Society. Or do what some of us rangers do. Before setting out on a walk, put a small garbage bag in your pocket and keep an eye out so our ‘hood stays lovely.



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## ART & CULTURE REPORT

# THE FAIR BEFORE THE FESTIVAL: AN ORAL HISTORY OF THE UPPER GRANT AVENUE STREET FAIR

Romalyn Schmaltz, Committee Chair  
romalyn.schmaltz@thd.org

This summer, North Beach celebrated the 62nd Annual North Beach Festival with hundreds of vendors lining Grant Avenue, Vallejo and Green Streets, Columbus Avenue, and Washington Square Park. Nowadays, we think of this as a North Beach weekend event, but it was born as a small fair on upper Grant Avenue. Many of the Telegraph Hill Dwellers' board members volunteered at THD's Green Street booth, and we got to talking about the Festival's origins, and whether its future iterations might be able to revisit its roots.

Daniel Macchiarini is the second-generation North Beach artist and historian at his old-world yet avant-garde shop, Macchiarini Creative Design, at 1544 Grant Avenue. He welcomes discussions about the real, textural history of the neighborhood when you drop in at his shop. As his family was central to the Fair's origins, Danny easily launches into the oral history of the North Beach Street Fair at once.

"The idea of a street fair was always a crackpot idea of artists, and it actually started with Benny Bufano and my father [sculptor Beniamino Benevenuto Bufano and sculptor/jeweler Peter Macchiarini] in the late 30s, early 40s, before the war broke out. They'd always had this idea that we should just take part of the street and close it to traffic, but the idea of closing a thoroughfare, even then, was considered a truly crackpot idea.

"It was never conceived of as a 'festival.' It was not a fair in the park, it was a street fair, conceived of as one day, Father's Day, and it went from 10 AM to 10 PM. It was a huge success, even though they had no way of knowing how to do this. They had never closed a street completely, not even for big parades. This proposal was extremely new, to only allow emergency vehicles if necessary. So it had to go to the Board of Supervisors for a vote. There was no ISCOTT [Interdepartmental Staff Committee on Traffic and Transportation] then, and it was only the next year that they formed the Police, Fire and Safety Committee, but this was the precedent-setter. It passed the BOS by one vote, and the reason they voted for it was because at this time there was a newly formed residents' organization on Telegraph Hill called the Telegraph Hill Dwellers, and my father was very close to them, and a lot of the artists who lived on the hill that time were instrumental in the formation of this group, including Bufano. The Telegraph Hill Dwellers have always been an essential part of the Fair's backbone.

"The great thing about it was that there was no food and no booze in the street. What happened instead was that the little merchants put tables out on the sidewalk for people to sit at, and then the local vendors were able to take in the commerce, so it directly benefited local merchants. It was a symbiotic relationship between the artists in the street and the local merchants. There were a tremendous amount of artists on just those three blocks.

"It was a tremendous success! We got excellent reviews and write-ups, such as from Herb Caen, who said, 'This has to become a San Francisco institution!' It took until 1959 for it to really take hold, and it kind-of smoothed out. At its height, in the seventies, it attracted over 200 merchants, mainly artists, from all over the world—potters from Japan, weavers from Germany—and it was extremely affordable. You could buy two spaces—the equivalent of 12 feet—along the curb for \$30 for two days, and that would be the equivalent of maybe \$100 today, so it was accessible. My father and mother formed a coalition with other artists called The Upper Grant Avenue Artists and Merchants Association (UGAAMA).

"My mother was UGAAMA's first treasurer, and she figured out that if you made just enough money on it, and spent it all on the community, even to do things like security, which locals like the Telegraph Hill Dwellers did, that it would basically zero out the amount of money so that all you would have left over was the seed money to hold the event again the next year. This prevented everyone from starting fights over money. The object was not to make money for the festival itself, or its organizers. The



Young neighborhood stewards clean up at the Upper Grant Avenue Street Fair.

object was to share North Beach art and culture with the world, and feature great world artists who would share with us. So there was much less chance of corruption or graft.

"It was a direct sum of benefits: it was a boon for the community, the local restaurateurs, the merchants, and the local residents. The thing to keep in mind was that because of its huge success, it became the progenitor and the template for every street fair in this country at that time. We were the mold.

"Then the city government got wise to how much money there was in this and started dipping their hands into the pot of money, so a space that cost \$15 now would cost hundreds of dollars, saying, 'Oh, we need to pay our police overtime,' so it became a kind of legal extortion, a graft machine. And then the insurance companies wanted a piece of the pie. So with this new, falsely created complexity, the merchants suddenly seemed to have little choice but to bring in corporate sponsors and organizations that did street fairs. My mother had actually made this incredible pamphlet called 'How to Make a Street Fair,' as a blueprint, with correspondence, meeting minutes, and she basically handed them the prototype. Then came all the corporations, like Apple and Chevy. What does Chevy have to do with North Beach?"

This, Macchiarini insists, runs counter not just to the spirit but to the whole methodology of the original street fair, which often invited inebriated patrons to work off their infractions, rather than just threw them in the drunk tank. "Huge vats," the size of kegs but filled with coffee, were offered to the hyper-Dionysians in the crowd, who helped clean up the fair and assisted with the fray. It was, in Macchiarini's estimation, another way in which the neighborhood took care of its own while giving back to the greater community experience.

North Beach Business Association president Fady Zoubi, who oversaw some of the planning for this year's event, feels part of the problem consists of merchants' dwindling interest in the Fair/Festival. Many seem to feel the event doesn't represent the character of the neighborhood anymore, and if anything, it's a financial burden. "I literally went knocking on every neighborhood business's door, and no one wanted to have a table or a booth, even at a discounted, local price. They just don't see the point." Zoubi went on to say that he hopes the coming year will include outreach to these local merchants, enticing them to stake their claim in the 2017 Festival at an affordable



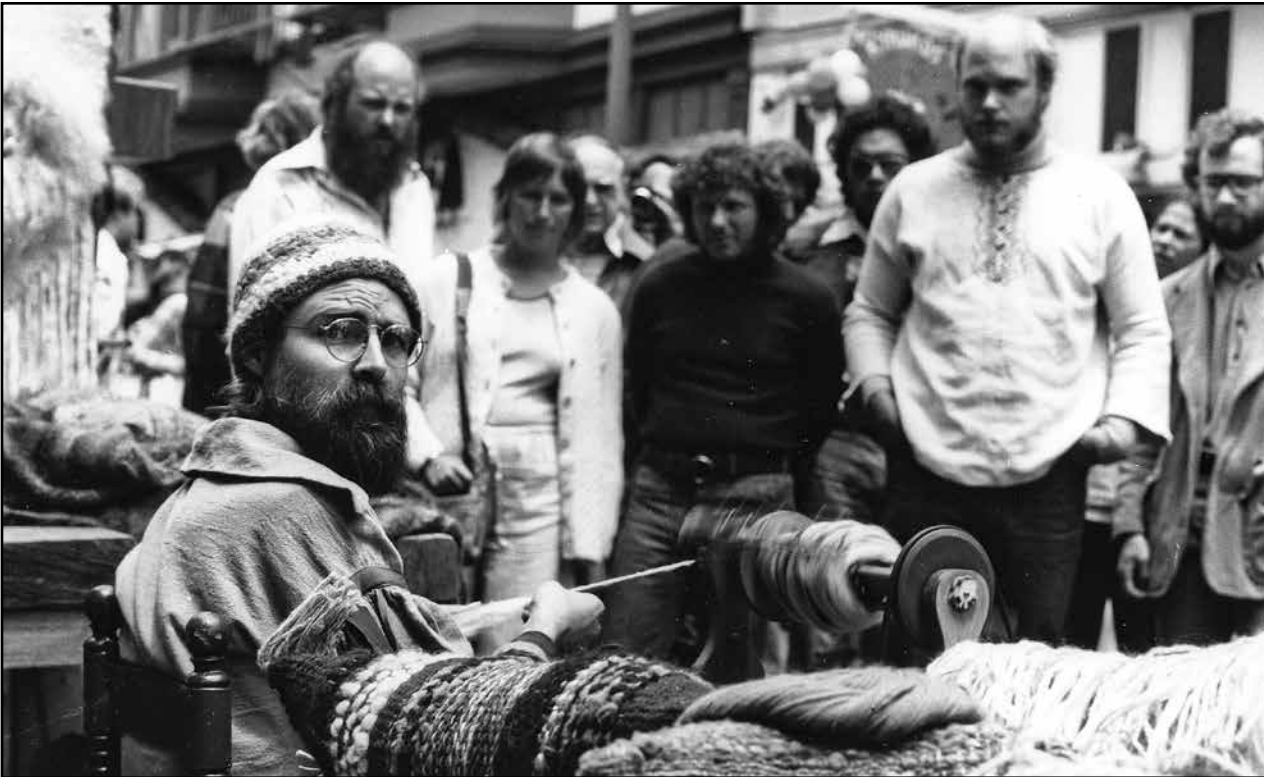
City supervisors and supporters of the original Upper Grant Avenue Street Fair.



Sidewalk chalk era and patrons at an early Fair, c1970s.

price, and return it, if not to its roots on one stretch of Grant Avenue, to a more truly local affair. “There’s very little surplus—the money made is instantly reinvested into next year, with a lot of those funds earmarked for locals, if they’ll take a chance and join us.”

Please contact Fady Zoubi or Kathleen Dooley of the North Beach Business Association, or a THD board member, to arrange for space in next year’s Festival.



A local weaving vendor at an early Fair.



Daniel (Danny) Macchiarini of Macchiarini Creative Design, who also supplied these photos.

# SEMAPHORE BULLETIN BOARD

## FREE JOB SEARCH MEETINGS

that can jumpstart your job search or get you out of the career doldrums  
Sponsored by the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce, The Job Forum provides job search networking and career support to professional job seekers in the San Francisco Bay Area.  
The Job Forum 235 Montgomery St., Mezzanine conf room Every Wednesday evening, 6:30-8:30 [thejobforum.org](http://thejobforum.org)  
Free for job seekers

## GROW YOUR COMFORT ZONE

Ever considered helping the homeless in a safe and friendly environment?  
Why not join us for one of our monthly dinners at Sts. Peter and Paul Church?  
Dinners are held 5:00 p.m. the final Sunday of each month.  
Volunteers are asked to arrive by 3:30, and we also suggest you contact us first to let us know you are planning to help.  
Email or call Marc Bruno, 415-421-0809 (Church),  
or, [marcabruno@yahoo.com](mailto:marcabruno@yahoo.com).  
Thanks for all you do for those in need!

## NEIGHBORS HELPING NEIGHBORS

North Beach Citizens welcomes volunteers and donations!  
We are a community based non-profit organization that utilizes the strength of the neighborhood to effectively address the needs of homeless and low-income citizens through an innovative collaboration of residents, merchants, police, and service providers.  
If you haven’t stopped by lately, come visit our new headquarters at 1034 Kearny.  
For hours, directions, and all other information:  
<http://www.northbeachcitizens.org/>  
(415) 772-0918

# ART & CULTURE CALENDAR

Here are some art and culture events scheduled in North Beach in the coming months:

## GALLERY CALENDAR:

Grey City Gallery (250 Columbus at Saroyan Alley)  
From Elizabeth Ashcroft’s exciting new gallery:  
Join us for North Beach First Fridays, November 4, 5-9 pm – a group show featuring work by all of the 2016 Guest Artists, along with North Beach drawings and altered books by resident artist and proprietor Elizabeth Ashcroft. Show continues on Saturday, Nov. 5th from 2-5, and then December 2nd & January 6th. Contact Elizabeth for more information - [eastudio@comcast.net](mailto:eastudio@comcast.net)

Modern Eden Gallery (721 Filbert St. / [moderneden.com](http://moderneden.com)):  
Hindsight: A Group Exhibition featuring Josh Keyes, Sandra Yagi, Ahren Hertel, Ellen Jewett, Ahren Hertel and Ellen Jewett, Nov. 4 – Dec.3; Solo Exhibition for Edith Lebeau, December 2016.

The North Beach Bauhaus (703 Columbus Ave. / contact [romalynschmaltz@gmail.com](mailto:romalynschmaltz@gmail.com) for more scheduling information):  
The Brown Kaleidoscope: The Paintings of Marc A. Brown (first Solo Exhibition), Opening Nov. 4 (First Friday) – Nov. 18; Legacy Personalities: Portraits of San Franciscans by 20 artists, Opening Dec. 2 (First Friday) – Dec. 31.

## ONGOING:

Check out the new Mule Design Studios on Fresno Alley off Grant Avenue, former home of The Emerald Tablet. They offer classes, collaborations, and multimedia art and culture opportunities.  
<http://muledesign.com>

Swing by Macchiarini Creative Design at 1544 Grant Ave. to learn about exciting new metalworking and jewelry classes available from multiple generations of this 68-year North Beach Institution.  
<http://maccreativedesign.com>

And please join the THD Art & Culture committee. We sponsor and host many events every year, and want/need members. Come help make your neighborhood event calendar dreams come true. Contact me, the Chair, at [romalynschmaltz@gmail.com](mailto:romalynschmaltz@gmail.com) for more information on future meetings, which usually take place Sunday afternoons at the North Beach Bauhaus. All ages and interests are welcome. Let’s make this year eventful!

## NOONTIME CONCERTS

“San Francisco’s Musical Lunch Break”  
FREE classical performances by outstanding local and international artists  
Every Tuesday, 12:30-1:15 (approximately)  
Old St. Mary’s Cathedral, corner of California and Grant  
Admission is free; please make a \$5 donation if you can.  
<http://noontimeconcerts.org/>

## NORTH BEACH FIRST FRIDAYS

Stroll down Columbus Avenue on the first Friday evening of each month to see what’s new in the neighborhood. From 6 to 9 PM you’ll find an open-house welcome at art galleries, boutiques, and local watering holes, as well as pop-ups and cultural events welcome the neighborhood. Remind yourself how much fun it is to live in such a vibrant corner of the world by rediscovering the thriving local art scene while you support the creative community behind it. Events vary from month to month, so check the *North Beach First Fridays* website, Facebook page, and Twitter feed for the latest openings, closings, and events.



# THIRD QUARTER BOARD MEETING SUMMARIES

by Stan Hayes, President  
stan.hayes@thd.org

## July 19, 2016

Stan Hayes reported to the board on a number of topics, including THD's participation in a North Beach transportation meeting organized by Supervisor Peskin, and ongoing efforts by board members to protect North Beach in the SF Planning Department's proposed revisions to Article 7 of the Planning Code.

The board reviewed its prior goal-setting efforts and further discussed goals for 2016, particularly efforts to update the THD website as well as other communications and outreach means. A motion was made and seconded to establish a Communications Committee. The motion was passed unanimously.

Committee reports were made and discussed, including The Semaphore, Planning & Zoning, Budget, Social & Program, Art & Culture, Membership, Parks, Trees, & Birds, Transportation & Parking, and Waterfront.

A request for a donation to the St. Vincent De Paul Society to support monthly dinners for the homeless and poor at SS. Peter and Paul was discussed. The board was very supportive of the dinners. Although THD is not a funding organization, the board encour-

aged individual members to make donations.

## August 2016

The board did not meet during August, per its usual practice. The board has ten regular monthly meetings during the year, usually on the second Tuesday of the month. The board does not meet during August or December.

## September 13, 2016

Stan Hayes reported to the board on a number of topics, including THD's participation in the successful SF Symphony's All San Francisco Concert and the SF Police Department Central Station's National Night Out event, and Executive Committee activities since the last board meeting in July.

Board member Robert Woehrle gave an update on the THD website redesign and status. Board member Paul Webber reported on the status of the Planning Department's revision of Article 7 of the Planning Code.

Jeff Joslin, Director of Current Planning at the SF Planning Department, made a presentation to the board about the Department's draft Urban Design Guidelines. The board asked a number of questions and, after Mr. Joslin and his team had left, discussed the proposal, expressing a number of concerns. Following that discussion, motions were made and seconded

to adopt a THD resolution and to recommend a similar resolution to the Coalition for San Francisco Neighborhoods (CSFN). Both THD's resolution and the proposal to CSFN oppose the draft guidelines as currently written for reasons stated in THD's initial comment letter of September 2. The resolutions passed unanimously.

Committee reports were made and discussed, including The Semaphore, Planning & Zoning, Budget, Social & Program, Art & Culture, Membership, Parks, Trees, & Birds, Transportation & Parking, and Waterfront.

After discussion, a motion was made and seconded to propose a CSFN resolution opposing the retail plan for Pier 29 as updated by developer Jamestown, LP. The motion was passed unanimously. Also, after extended discussion and prior outreach to others in the community, a motion was made and seconded to oppose the request by two establishments on Broadway to extend their closing hour from 2 AM to 4 AM. The motion was passed unanimously.

The board meeting was adjourned in memory of June Osterberg, one of THD's longest and most beloved members, who gave years of service to THD, from writing Semaphore articles to testifying at City Hall. ✕

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- L.R.

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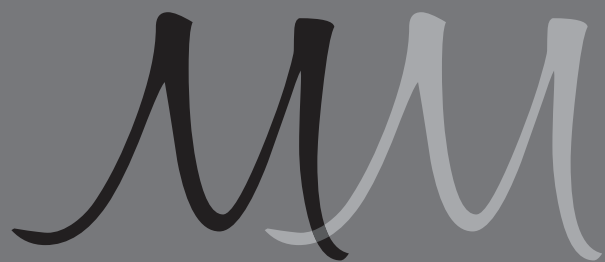
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**THD COMMITTEES NEED YOU**  
Get involved in our neighborhood and make a difference!  
Join a THD committee and help keep the Hill a special place to live.

**STANDING COMMITTEES**

Art & Culture: Romalyn Schmalz (Chair) Contact Romalyn at romalyn.schmalz@thd.org  
Budget: Joe Luttrell (Chair) Contact Joe at joe.luttrell@thd.org  
Membership: Melissa Mountain (Chair) Contact THDMembership@gmail.com  
Oral History Project: TBD  
Parking/Transportation/Subway: Michael Pedroni and Howard Wong  
Contact Michael at michael.pedroni@thd.org or Howard at howard.wong@thd.org  
Parks, Trees, & Birds: Carlo Arreglo & Judy Irving (Co-Chairs)  
Contact Carlo at carlo.arreglo@thd.org or Judy at judy.irving@thd.org  
Planning & Zoning: Mary Lipian (Chair) Contact Mary at mary.lipian@thd.org  
Semaphores: Judy Irving, Julie Jaycox, Carol Verburg, contact: semaphore@thd.org  
Social & Program: Marilee Gaffney (Chair) Contact Marilee Gaffney at marilee.gaffney@thd.org  
Waterfront: Jon Golinger (Chair) Contact Jon at jon.golinger@thd.org

**PLANNING & ZONING COMMITTEE MEETS** last Thursdays.  
Call for time and location. 986-7070, 563-3494, or 391-5652.

**LIAISONS WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS**

Central Police District Community Advisory Board: Daryl Babbitt  
Coalition for San Francisco Neighborhoods: Paul Webber  
Friends of Washington Square Liaison: Marilee Gaffney  
Neighborhood Network Liaison: Gerry Crowley  
Northeast Waterfront Advisory Group Member: Jon Golinger

## FRIENDS OF WASHINGTON SQUARE

Meet on the 2nd Tuesday every month, with work parties in the  
Square every quarter.  
See website for times, dates, locations.

*www.friendsofwashingtonsquare.com*

## TELEGRAPH HILL DWELLERS

Voice Mail: (415) 843-1011. Web Site: [www.thd.org](http://www.thd.org)  
P.O. Box 330159 • San Francisco, CA 94133

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**Term: 2016-2017**  
Marilee Gaffney  
Andy Katz  
Romalyn Schmalz  
Katie Hopkins

**Term: 2016-2018**  
Paul Webber  
Robert Woehrle  
Natalie Parker  
Don Raichle

# WELCOMING NEW MEMBERS!

**There's no better way to be connected to your neighborhood and be a voice of the hill than by joining Telegraph Hill Dwellers, today.**

Join at *THD.org*. If you'd prefer to have a brochure and sign-up form mailed to you, please send an email to *membership@thd.org*. Already a member? Give one as a gift!

**Membership includes:**

- A one-year subscription to news & events via email and a quarterly paper, *The Semaphore*.
- Opportunities to be active in your community. Your passion likely aligns to one of many committees.
- Social and Art & Culture events throughout the year – attend and contribute!

**Annual Dues:**

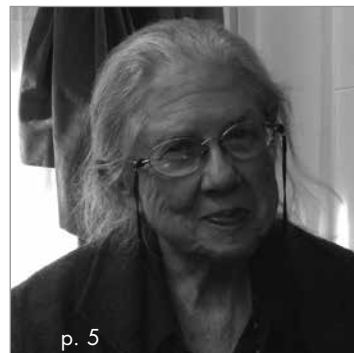
Individuals..... \$35  
Households..... \$50  
Seniors (65 and older)..... \$25  
Senior Households..... \$40

Join now or give the gift of membership at *THD.org* or email *membership@thd.org*.





TELEGRAPH HILL DWELLERS  
P. O. Box 330159  
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94133



# THE SEMAPHORE

#215 Autumn 2016

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# The Semaphore

A Publication of the TELEGRAPH HILL DWELLERS

Issue 215

Autumn 2016

Beekeeping on the Hill  
Key Ballot Propositions  
Saying GoodBye to June  
Cliff-Hangers

VOTE FOR OUR  
NEIGHBORHOOD!